

# IF IT ISN'T A SONG OF THE SOUTH, TAKE IT AWAY

**Northern and Western States Simply Haven't the Inspirational Material, According to the Makers of Music**

IF YOU are a song writer, there isn't much of the map of the United States that is going to interest you. It can't, in the scheme of things, for apparently there is a little circle of euphoniously named Southern states that is getting about everything in the line of geographical words and music.

Referring to the map, we start at Tennessee and draw lines radiating therefrom into Kentucky, Alabama, Georgia and Virginia, and even as far as Maryland and Louisiana. That will be about all for the composer, if he wants to make a living writing songs in which the states figure.

If you take a song into any jazz shop in "Tin Pan Alley" and the cynical individual in charge takes your script and sees a mention of some such state as Pennsylvania, Rhode Island or Nebraska, he hands the thing right back and you start for the next shop, only to have the thing happen again. After you have gone up and down "Tin Pan Alley" until you know just how far out of tune each piano in that resonant thoroughfare happens to be, you yield to the demands of convention and go back home and substitute the name of a "regular" song state for the outlaw state you had chosen.

**"Gin-Gin-Ginny"—Yes;  
"Hud-Hud-Hudson"—No**

Nobody can tell why songs are so limited geographically. In "Tin Pan Alley" you get dubious head-shakings when the matter is mentioned.

"The other states just simply don't seem to have the song goods, that's all," said one of the experts at what seemed to be the busiest of the alley's factories. "If you write a song about the beautiful Hudson you're through before you start, but if you make it about some river down South, you've got it sold. Southern names seem to lend themselves more to jazz treatment, too. Take 'On the Gin-gin-ginny shore.' You can't say on the 'Hud-Hud-Hudson shore.' A singer'd make it sound like 'Dud' instead of 'Hud,' and the song surely'd be a dud. Lots of people have tried to put the East over in song, but few have succeeded when you compare their work with the songs about the South. Why, they even capitalize their bum luck down there, as somebody's put over a song about the 'Roll-weevil Blues.' Can you beat that?"

Obviously, nobody could. One could not imagine an Eastern song writer popularizing an orchardist's jazz melody entitled "The San Jose Scale Blues" nor a middle Western songster having any chance with a song about the Kansas wheat rust. As the man in the music shop said, the South can get away with murder when it comes to music—and sometimes it does.

## ARE TEACHERS HAPPY?

(Continued from page six)

woman who has quit a teacher's for a reporter's desk, "but I realized that I couldn't lead an adventurous life if I taught. I saw three thousand of us at a convention. We were drab. I quit."

She wanted—and now has—an adventurous life. Another woman, escaped from pedagogical captivity, phrased it thus: "I could not give up the hope of marriage. I had no especial intention of going after the experience, but the thought that I was cut off from the possibility was intolerable."

The old maid stigma is on the schoolma'am. She loses her expectation of love—of a man's love. Love of parents and pupils and God and one's friends is all right in its way, but it is a man's love that keeps a woman well dressed and mobile and robust. A woman who gives up the expectation of that kind of love is very likely to become drab and wistful. Or dictatorial and crystallized.

I am not holding that married women are happier than unmarried ones. But, I might put it, they are more contented in their unhappiness. They have, at worst, found out that there is nothing in marriage and can turn their attention to other interests more completely than can those whose illusions are unsatisfied.

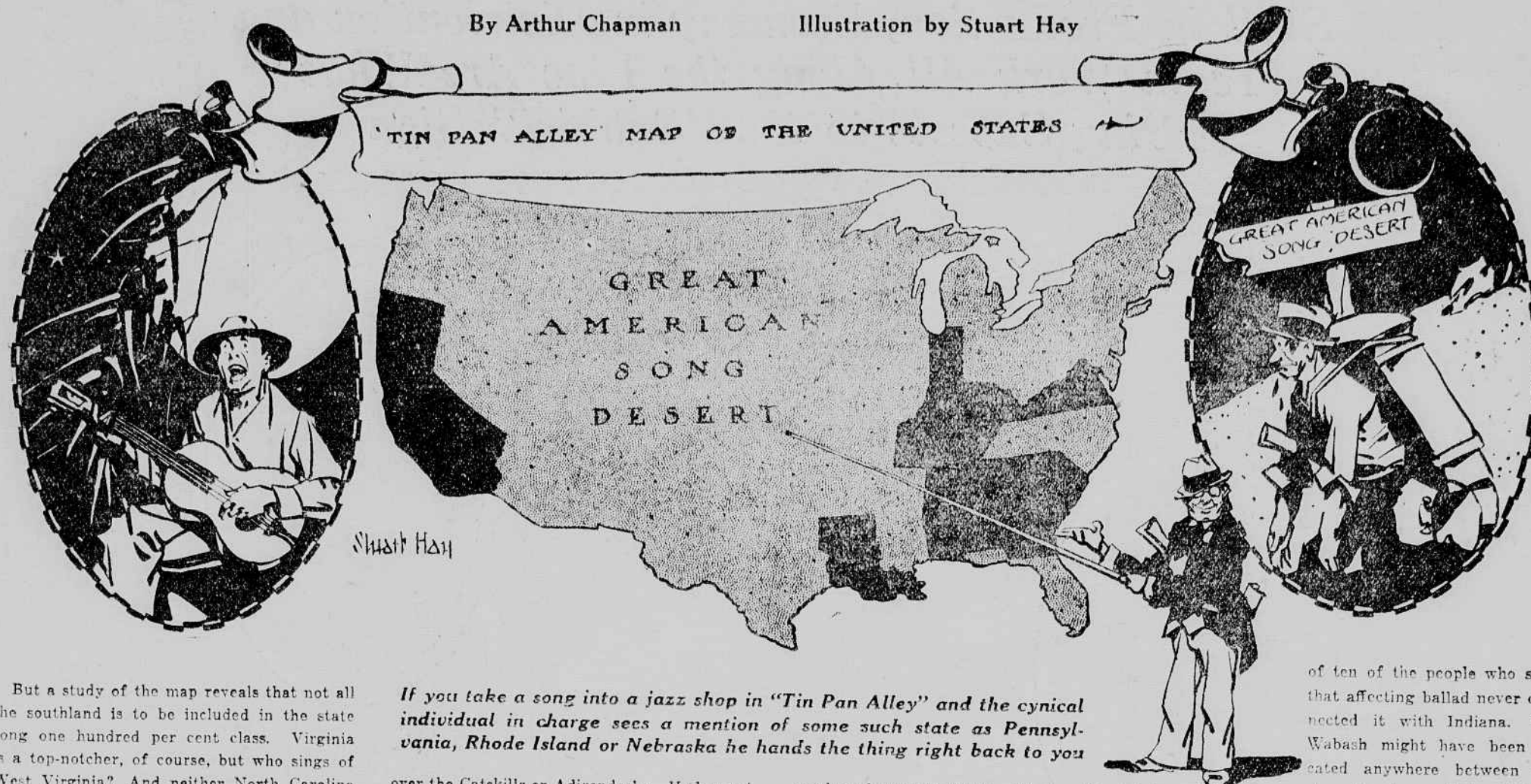
"How do your married teachers get along?" I asked one of those principals who consider the happiness of their staff part of their responsibility.

His face lit up. "They are the best teachers I have," he replied. "They don't pour all their emotions into the schoolroom. Their work goes smoothly. Yes, a married woman makes the best teacher. And the happiest."

"Especially," a woman added, "if she has a baby at home with some one else taking care of it."

By Arthur Chapman

Illustration by Stuart Hay



If you take a song into a jazz shop in "Tin Pan Alley" and the cynical individual in charge sees a mention of some such state as Pennsylvania, Rhode Island or Nebraska he hands the thing right back to you

over the Catskills or Adirondacks. He has put his approval on songs about Coney Island, but not Long Island. That's another song "dud."

**The Middle West Broke In Just About Once**

The Middle Western tier of states ought to be in the song catalogue, but it isn't to any alarming extent. There is opportunity for a good heart-interest song about a young capitalist in North Dakota, who falls in love with a daughter of a Nonpartisan League leader, only to have the girl throw him over because he is not of her political faith. Such a story could be worked over from the song into a novel and then re-sold as a motion picture. The material for a triple success seems to be there—but "Tin Pan Alley" can't see it. As for Iowa, Nebraska and Oklahoma, their possibilities are mild. Oklahoma offers some chances to anybody who can work in a tomtom effect and a few jazz war whoops, because most people in the East still think of Oklahoma as in an uncivilized stage, instead of bulging with oil millionaires. Texas, Arizona and New Mexico might be good for a limited

number of songs about the wild, free life of the cowgirls, even though there may be very few cowgirls left, but such songs don't seem to hit it off any more. Songs with "nestle" or "cuddle" have the call over songs that deal with wild and tempestuous life on the broad prairie.

Of course, Reno has absolutely put Nevada out of the running for state songs with any sentiment in them. There's plenty to get sentimental about in Nevada—lots of fine scenery—but the thought of Reno would bring a snicker that would spoil everything. Consequently the writer of geographical songs just does a hop-skip-jump across the state that Mark Twain immortalized.

Among the Coast states California, through the grace of Puccini and the industry of its music-writing native sons and daughters, is the only one that has figured in song to any extent. But even those songs have been sung mostly by Californians. They haven't had the universal appeal.

Of course, some states have proved exceptions. When Paul Dresser—whose real name was Dreiser—wrote "On the Banks of the Wabash" it is more than likely that nine out

of ten of the people who sang that affecting ballad never connected it with Indiana. The Wabash might have been located anywhere between the Canadian line and the Gulf. It happened to be a good name for a tune that went well to the accompanying jingle of beer glasses and the swish of the bartender's towel.

If you don't think the South is running strong in the song market, with no bear movement in sight, just consider the following titles, picked at random from a phonograph company's catalogue of recent records:

"Alabama Moon," "Underneath the Southern Skies," "Mississippi Moonlight," "Kentucky," "I've Got the Blues for My Old Kentucky Home," "I Love the Land of Old Black Joe," "It's Melotime in Dixie Land," "Louisiana Waltz," "Sippi Shore," "You Can't Go Wrong With a Girl From Dixieland," "My Dixie Rosary," "Dixieland Is Happyland," "On Miami Shore," "Throw Out That Mason and Dixon Line," "Carolina Lullaby," "Where the Lazy Mississippi Flows."

**You'd Almost Think There Was a Song Trust**

In the catalogue from which these titles were taken, Wyoming is mentioned once and Michigan once. Otherwise not a state fig-

**When You Get Outside the Realm of Magnolias and Whipporwills You're in the Great American Song Desert**

ures outside of the trust boundaries which have been mentioned.

All of which, of course, is absolutely no fair. There are plenty of other localities that offer song possibilities in plenty, but somebody has to spoil things with satire or mere doggerel. Take Missouri, for instance. "Joe Bowers" was a good enough start in its day. But nobody kept up the good work. Missouri just went along without any notable song until finally some one sprung that "You Gotta Quit Kickin' My Back Around." Arkansas might have been bringing sobs to the human breast if it had not been for "The Arkansas Traveler." Colorado is a pretty enough name to appeal to any song writer, but the state never has been honored with a real song. To be sure there was one a few years ago entitled "Where the Silvery Colorado Winds Its Way," but there wasn't any Colorado River in Colorado until a few months ago, when, by legislative enactment, the Grand River was given that name. Massachusetts should have figured long ago. There aren't any more s's in the name than in Mississippi, so objections on the ground of sibilants cannot be considered a legitimate.

**"Tin Pan Alley" Publishes Only What Pays**

Apparently the trouble is that the song writers who weave in and out of "Tin Pan Alley" must write with instant reward in view. They can't afford to take a chance something which will have to battle its way to public favor against long-established opinion and prejudice. So they write about states in the magic circle centering about Tennessee and reaching to Louisiana on the south and Maryland on the east. It's simply a game of playing safe. Obviously the only thing for the neglected states to do is to subsidize a few song writers. The subsidizing might be done by the states separately or as a unit. If a young song writer figured that his financial future was safe, he could experiment with New Jersey, Vermont, Utah, Iowa and other states that are outside the present trust, and eventually those neglected communities might come into their own. As the successful song writers, who had made their pile out of southern melodies would feel, as they do now, that they were risking their reputations and incomes if they tried to set Eastern and Middle Western themes music.

Until some such subsidy is arranged, it is apparent that the man who is from some commonplace sort of state and is going home is absolutely nothing sentimental to hum. And the man who is going home without anything to hum is being cheated out of his just dues.

## WHAT MOVIE FANS KNOW

By Don Gray

THAT the Great Northwest is inhabited exclusively by dance-hall girls in short skirts and Northwest Mounted Policemen;

That the only reason for showing a person reading a book on the screen is so that she may be interrupted reading it;

That a country boy is always virtuous, while a city chap in a dress suit means no good by Our Nell;

That when a picture is produced at a cost of half a million dollars a delicatessen clerk is always hired to write the sub-titles;

That the sub-titles must always include "That night"—"Dawn" and "When at last spring came";

That the mothers of eighteen-year-old boys and girls are always doddering, white-haired ladies old enough to be their grandmothers;

That girls and wives running away from home always leave notes on the bureau and these are discovered by the father or husband after they have looked all around for the piece of paper for thirty feet of film;

That a woman who smokes a cigarette on the screen is a bad woman, unless she does it to save her husband's life or something equally important;

That very rich people never have less than four butlers serve dinner;

That a cute little child coming down stairs in her nightie can solve the most desperate domestic problems, including pending divorce;

That doctors in the movies always have long whiskers;

That if the heroine is married to a man other than the hero in the first reel something unfortunate will happen to the husband before the fifth;

That the wettest thing in the world is a movie rain;

That Pola Negri makes love with her shoulders, Gloria Swanson with her eyes, Mae Murray with her knees, Charlie Chaplin with his feet and Bill Hart with his chest.

# AN UNCONVENTIONAL SUCCESS STORY

By JAMES J. MONTAGUE

Illustrations by MERLE JOHNSON

YOU can find John H. Thug (if you are not a policeman or a police detective) in the handsomely furnished private office of the Horseshoe, Sandbag & Jimmy Renting Company, Inc., in one of the most expensive business buildings in New York.

Like all very busy men, he is most approachable and always ready to talk of his success and how he came by it.

In fact, if you are a magazine panegyrist or a newspaper reporter and do not turn up in his anteroom for an interview once or twice a year he will send around to the editor and inquire what has become of you. Modest though he is, Mr. Thug believes firmly in the value of publicity.

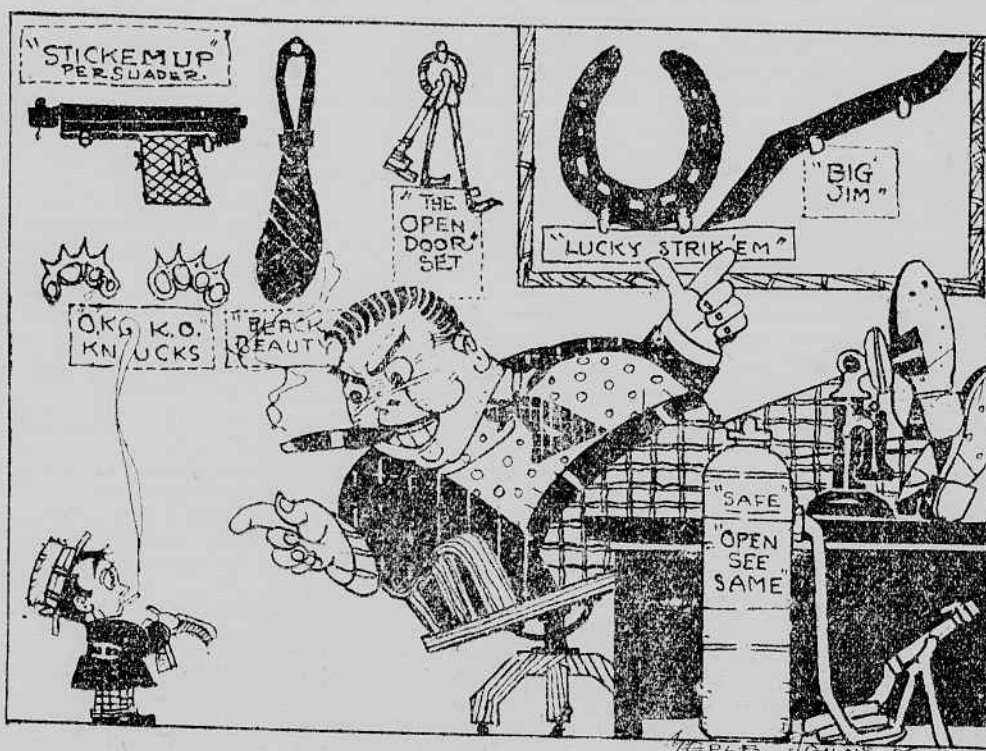
John H. Thug now owns a business for which he has lately refused an offer of \$10,000,000. That business was built on an idea, and the idea was founded on a fetish—nothing other than the childish belief that there is luck in horseshoes.

But Mr. Thug understood the art of supplementing superstition with brains and hard work. And that is why he sits at his ease in a great office, while hundreds of men, at the risk of lives and liberty and sacred honor, pile up dividends for his corporation.

"I give all the credit for my success to my gray-haired father," is the way Mr. Thug begins his story. "It was he who brought home the horseshoe. You see, our cozy little home was in the gas-house district, and father returning to his family of a night sometimes got into a dispute with the Hudson Dusters, whose clubhouse was just around the corner. He had found horseshoes very efficacious in these differences.

"On this particular evening the Hudson Dusters were engaged elsewhere, so he brought home the horseshoe, tossing it outside the door as he entered.

"Being a bright and investigating child, I gathered up the missile the next morning and



## LUCK PLUS BRAINS

John H. Thug made ten million dollars partly by luck. He found a horseshoe and he knew what to do with it. The crime wave made him rich, but he tells you how rugged honesty, unflagging industry and honesty helped. Also he admits his debt to his gray-haired father.

hung it over the door. A few evenings later I was passing a dwelling in Gramercy Park when I observed a burglar endeavoring futilely to raise a window.

"Is there anything I can do to help you, sir?" I inquired.

"Yes," he said, "give me a jimmy."

"Now, although I had never seen a jimmy, I had frequently heard my father speak of the one he used in his early life, and like a flash I saw how one could be fashioned from that horseshoe.

"If you will wait a few minutes, sir," I said, "I guess I can accommodate you."

"Happy to think that, child though I was, I was at least able to do something real and vital in the world, I raced home. With eager fingers I plucked the horseshoe from over the

door. In the basement was an old vice left by a plumber and a sledge hammer, which my father had used earlier in life when he was unable to obtain a sandbag and needed a few dollars that belated passersby had in their pockets.

"A few blows sufficed to make a straight, flat iron bar of the horseshoe. Hiding it under my coat, I hurried back to the scene of the projected robbery and thrust it into the hand of the waiting burglar.

"He seized it, applied it to the sash, and, with a grinding noise, the inside lock gave way and up flew the window. When he returned with a bagful of loot he tossed me a handsome diamond brooch. 'Take that for your trouble,' he said.

"Many children would have spent the money

Mr. Thug sat back and puffed a cigar. "And don't forget," he added, "that I owe my start to my gray-haired father. By the way, when will you be around again for another article?"

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